



Permanent Mission
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
to the United Nations – New York

STATEMENT

BY

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**at the General Debate of the Economic and Social Council
Forum on Financing for Development 2018**

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Thank you Madam President. It is a great honor for me to attend this year's ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the statements to be delivered by Bangladesh on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, and Paraguay on behalf of Landlocked Developing Countries.

Madam President,

Though the poverty rate has declined at the global level, poverty is still concentrated in countries affected by conflict. As a result of a prolonged armed conflict, Afghanistan still has one of the highest poverty rate of 54.5%.

This is why my Government confers to the Financing for Development process the utmost importance as a critical tool in channeling resources to reduce poverty and achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

In this context, special attention should be given to LDCs and conflict affected countries, as they continue to face large investment gaps in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. This is why it is crucial that we ensure full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

Madam President,

Afghanistan finalized the nationalization process of SDGs, incorporating its targets (121) and indicators (188) into the Government's programs and projects.

Out of the Government's annual budget for 2018, only 23.5% has been allocated for development programs. Considering that **54.5%** of our population is living below the poverty line and 44% is food insecure, it seems very difficult to eradicate poverty and achieve food security by 2030.

Despite these challenges, there are positive factors in the investment potential of Afghanistan. The transition to greater sovereignty has required political and economic reforms set in motion by the National Unity Government. As a testament to these achievements, the economic growth rate has increased to **2.6** percent in 2017, and is expected to gradually increase to around **5** percent by 2020.

Madam President,

My humble proposal in the evolving environment of today would be to continue to rethink our approaches towards supporting SDGs in fragile and conflict situations. We all agreed that no one should be left behind but in my view, we need to prioritize the most in need. This requires a serious shifting away from the traditional way of investing in general programs towards more targeted approaches.

A potential approach would be to boost the country's production capacity to capture the domestic market while increasing exports.

Madam President, I would like to insist on the following:

1. The private sector needs a helping hand and we need to provide that. In the very scarce world leveraging the private sector capacity is critical. But in this regard risk guarantee schemes through financial institutions can be a critical area of support to incentivize private investment.
2. Consistency and collaboration between UN agencies, Governments and financial institutions related to the SDG agenda should be a MUST.
3. Last but not least, we need to be cognizant of the fact that modalities of financing, rather than the size, will be instrumental.

In conclusion, the FFD process will require strong political will to live up to its promises and achieve the vision set forward. But if any country or countries lag behind in achieving the SDGs in 2030, it will be a collective responsibility.

Thank you Madam President.